

## ALIENATION, IDENTITY CRISIS AND RACIAL MEMORY: THE REALITIES OF BLACKS IN DIASPORA IN ANDREA LEVY'S *FRUIT OF THE LEMON*

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### ABSTRACT

In Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon*, with a pensive commentary on history and racism, lies the deep question of existence: the import of knowing who one is, and the process for the acquisition of the intellectual equipment that is needed to define whom one is. Like most postcolonial novels, this one opens up the issues of the ambivalence, chaos, and confusion that result from the lacuna created in the distance between humans and places which stands as a bane to family and social harmony.

This paper will focus on the nexus that joins alienation, identity crisis and racial memory together as the manifestation of the dislocation of the blacks in Diaspora; the disillusionment; and the socio-economic exclusion that the blacks in Europe face.

The trajectory here will show how place, identity and social relation in post World War II England jointly shape the consciousness of the Windrush immigrants, whom the adoption of the prevailing ideology and social values of England becomes an inevitable option if they would survive the post World War II hard times. The essay therefore takes a tripartite nature; hence the discourse will be historical, theoretical and analytical as it explores the fictional personages (Faith, Wade, Mildred, and so on), struggling to make sense of their environment, as a microcosm of many other blacks in Diaspora.

**KEYWORDS:** Alienation, Racial Memory, Identity Crisis, Diaspora and Realities

### INTRODUCTION

The conception, birth, toddling, growth, development and popularization of Caribbean literature from its inception up until now have been a nexus; if not a dialectics with their historical indices/realities as the genre itself is guarded by the literary ideals and tradition of black consciousness that have its foundation in the history of the Caribbeans and other diasporic historic experiences.

The Caribbeans whom the Trans Atlantic slave trade, like the big bang eruption, uprooted from their different roots and transplanted into a new world to suffer not just the pangs of servitude but *rootlessness* and *unhomelinee* (Bhabha) seeing that they lack a common culture, language or religion. Such physical (geographical) and psychological (mental) separation from their cultural mainstream result in their alienation that now manifests as identity crisis, especially for the slave descendants born in Europe by migrant parents whom the Windrush (Eldorado-quest) brought to England; this is the context under which Faith, the daughter of such a migrant parent (Mildred and Wade Jackson) operates in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon*.

She is oblivious of her history and true identity and that orchestrates her crisis of identity, confused sense of belonging, of who she thinks she is. However this crisis, as our study will show, can only be cured through racial memory a kind of unlearning her and then acquainting her with the realities of her true history. The above scenario will constitute

the trajectory of this paper as we explore Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon*. A need take a cursor survey of what brought the Caribbeans to England is expedient here.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CARIBBEANS IN ENGLAND

The Caribbeans during the Post Second World War II era; which was otherwise called the Windrush era, a name adopted from the name of the ship that conveyed most of them. These Caribbeans came on official invitation from the British government to come and seek a better life and greener pasture in England (mother country) as propitiation, if not reward, for the efforts of the blacks in support of the English in the Second World War –an unchecked solidarity the blacks rendered to their mother country.

Their arrival shaped the dynamics of social, cultural, and political lives of both the native British and the black British owing to their relentless struggle against hardship, the English hostility and the disillusionment that greeted their great expectation for better economic situation. These Caribbeans are pushed by the Eldorado myth in that they are much excited to be going to behold a land they have dreamed so much about, studied about in schools, such is the sojourn of Mildred and Wade Jackson. The irony they meet in England is a history of stereotypes attached to the Caribbeans. Educationally, they are considered below normalcy, accommodation wise, most landlords did not want to accommodate them. They rent rooms with shared bathrooms, toilets, and kitchen facilities

Moving it down to literature, Levy's oeuvre has contributed to the development of postcolonial women's writing, Caribbean literature, the migrant voice, and black British writing in a hybrid and creolised syntax; and her works usually feature alienation, identity crisis and racial memory altogether. The trio seems to be a palpable reaction from what seems Andrea Levy's literary thrust.

## ALIENATION AS A DISLOCATION, AN ACTION, A STATE OF MIND, AND STATE OF BEING

Alienation in the in *Oxford English Dictionary* means an act of estranging or state of estrangement in feeling or affection; and also a withdrawal of the individual from a group/larger society (219). In Marxism, Karl Marx sees alienation in the light of estranged labour under the capitalist mode of economic production (cited in Bloom 2). Alienation in this sense becomes part of man's consciousness in his existence in the world, for when man can no longer determine the direction of his labour; the quantity and value of his product, he is seen as lost in that context.

In other words, the estrangement here dichotomizes the individual into an acting (creative) being and man as a reacting (being influenced and manipulated by others) being. In the *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, alienation has variegated dimensions like the estrangement from one's cultural ethos, this aspect implies to a sense of removal from the established social values manifesting in the pervasive rebellion against conventional institutions. Robert Tally states that alienation originally means estrangement as in Celia in William Shakespeare's *As you Like it* where she takes up the name, 'Aliena' meaning the stranger in her sojourn in Arden with Rosalind (Tally in Bloom xv). He traces the concept to Sigmund Freud's work where Freud calls the estrangement from alienation, the 'uncanny' (*unheimlich*); alienating in the sense that we perceive in it our rejected thought return to us with an 'alienated stride' (Freud in Bloom xvi).

In social psychology, an alienation result in the withdrawal of the individual from the society and such isolation expresses itself in the act of neurosis (cited in Bloom 2). Worst still is the interiority of alienation in social theory, in the sense of the individual being out of touch with himself, a fragmenting of oneself. Be it the social, economic, or psychological dimension, alienation manifests arguably in the characters' actions, state of being or state of mind, as well as physical uprooting, if not dislocation from one's original home.

How does this apply to Faith our protagonist and her identity in *Fruit of the Lemon*? First, our interest in alienation here is not as an absolute concept but as a process with a destination which is identity crisis. Andrea, to ec Levy uses her fictional personages to hoist her views of society, especially the ignoble estrangement from one's entelechy (blackness in the case of the Caribbean Negroes). The disconnect in the familial relation between Faith, the daughter of Mildred and Wade Jackson and her family spells this estrangement. Alienation is purely a psychological state orchestrated by some inherent contradictions that manifest into series of complications and imbalances; one of which is identity crisis.

## IDENTITY CRISIS, A COMPLICATION FROM ALIENATION

Since the major preoccupation of literature for Andrew Bennette and Nicholas Royle is the exploration and reflection of personal identity, they then situate literature in that garb where questions about the nature of an individual's identity are 'most provocatively articulated' (125 & 128). Following this, is Kathy Stolley's assertion that, 'our status as social beings, whose lives are lived on interaction with others, is what defines our humanity'. As such, I want to situate identity crisis in the context of how humans are socially organized and how they interact.

Identity has a lot to do with socialization; 'socialization is the process of learning cultural patterns, behaviours and [social] expectations' placed on the individual (Stolley 61). As the individual acquires cultural values, norms and roles; his personality is being developed, it is this personality that defines the individual's identity. This has to be born in mind as we analyze Faith's identity crisis in the novel; for as Charles Horton Cooley has it, society provides one [especially the alienated one(s)] with a sort of mirror/looking glass that reflects to him whom he (she in Faith's case) is (cited in Stolley 62). When this happens, this reflection forms the individual's consciousness and value system, and gradually such a person ceases to act, rather begins to react; such a person ceases to think and unquestionably adopts the social values in a pervasive docility that begs for social acceptance. And it is this independent thought pattern, which ensures self will, self assertion and self determination informed by the individual's racial-cultural awareness and sensitivity, that define the individual's identity which is 'the unique sense' of who the individual is (Stolley).

Faith Jackson forms her self-image on the basis of Cooley's 'mirror effect'; she defines herself based on how she thinks her contemporaries (her young white friends) perceive her. For Stolley, the first stage into this process of crisis is her (Faith's) imagination of her appearance to others; then her imagination of their (her contemporaries') judgment of that appearance; and finally an adjustment and a longing for an identification with the class at the topmost echelon of the social ladder which will in turn present her superior to her own fellow black British, to say the least of the Caribbeans. As she understands that her society perceives a lighter-skinned person, notwithstanding that the person may be of black ancestry, superior to a dark-complexioned person, she begins to act in line with that perception as we will see in our analysis.

This is the effect of her exposure to a ring of the English primary group where she engages in an intimate interaction that ends in a pseudo fusion of their 'individualities' into a 'common whole' (63); this is what Cooley calls the 'we'. Now, any other person not integrated within the ambiance of this wholeness, 'for whatever reason the person is excluded', is seen as an 'other' or 'them', this is where Faith belongs. But for the out-group where her parents belong, they have their own sense of group identity and some shared norms, but they are in the minority. The crisis in Faith's identity is that she is of the minority but sees herself as belonging in the majority. This makes George Herbert Mead conclude that the individual is not born with such an alienated psyche or conflict of identity as the case may be; instead they are developed at the course of the growth, development, social experience and interaction of the individual (qtd in Stolley 63). This Stolley calls 'development of the symbolic interactionism'. This produces the following dialogue in the mind of the 'victims': 'if I accept him, his person will reflect on my identity and they may reject me' (64). With this neo thought system, the

individual fashions actions and reactions that would respond to the social perceptions and expectations that would ensure his sustenance in his state of 'false consciousness', this is what Mead calls 'role-taking'.

Stolley describes that the translation from alienation to identity crisis is not an absolute state that automatically happens but rather a continuum from the person's cradle through his developmental process into adulthood. For George Herbert Mead, the preplay stage of the child is the first where/when the child is born. The child responds to its environment. From there, the child grows into play stage, where/when the need for identity-formation crops up. At this stage, the child assumes a mock image of others.

## **RACIAL MEMORY: THE THERAPY FOR ALIENATION/IDENTITY CRISIS**

Racial memory is a kind of memory, consciousness, or even thought system that engages a nostalgic retrospect of the feelings, and ideas an individual inherits, remembers or is told of, as regards the injustices of history which his people suffered; and this memory now preoccupies his psyche as some collective unconscious. This memory is typical of a given racial group as concerns the evil done to this group in the past; put differently, the memory of a people's past 'years of denigration' (Achebe). The meaning of racial memory is not as important to us as its effect on the alienated and ambivalent postcolonial black man whose psyche needs liberation.

If there is a redeeming dimension to this aspect of the trio, it is not in the direct antidote that racial memory secretes, rather it is in its aftermath that re-inscribes the consciousness and sensitivity of ethnicity, race, and cultural consciousness. This in-turn fashions a new form of identity that will balance the disequilibrium that comes with alienation and identity crisis. Like Paul Ricoeur rightly points out that 'every consciousness is a consciousness of something' (Ricoeur 3), as such the ethnicity that racial memory promises involves, according to Stephen Steinberg, peculiar ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that constitute the essence of a given culture (ix). For him,

Culture is constantly changing as a part of the larger social process. Therefore social inquiry demands that ethnic patterns be related to the larger social matrix in which it is subsumed (ix).

If properly handled, racial memory imbues on the individual the spirit of ethnicity that informs the right cultural consciousness and influences the appropriate behaviour/attitude under the most apropos historical context. This is the awakening that comes from the 'ethnic fear' that if the racial minority of the blacks in Diaspora does not strife to rediscover their dying ethnicity and tie it to the flicker of their cultural past, then a threat of cultural extinction (deculturation) may bedevil them. Such ethnic fear does not manifest only in racial memory but also in Black Nationalism, a move to integrate as a strong 'front into an economic, political, and cultural mainstream' (Steinberg 3). As it concerns art and literature, they jointly tried to promote ethnic pride and solidarity, depicting their right to have a distinct identity even in the cultural pluralism of the Diasporic atmosphere (4) as we will shortly see in Andrea Levy's constant re-visitation of history in her novels.

In Steinberg's implication, racial memory is not even enough in raising the required amount of ethnic sensitivity and racial consciousness that would dissipate the convoluted state of the identity of the blacks in Diaspora, considering the systematized, yet subtle means from the mother country to debase the authority and influence of these three institutions that stand as pillars of the ethnic community –the institution of the family, the church, and the local community; this, for him is the root of identity crisis for the Blacks in Diaspora (57). Even more abysmal is the dislocation of the functions that initially justified the existence of these institutions, which is also what binds people to these institutions. To end the theoretical frame work, it would be pertinent to emphasize that, the ethnic group in every society serves as the 'nexus for the individual and group life,' and as Steinberg has it, provides a design for living out that social-sanctioned attitude and

behaviour from the cradle of the individual (57). But in the case of the Caribbeans, whose ethnicity is destroyed by slavery and the plantation system right from the Islands, not to talk of the Windrush migrants' children whose consciousness is shaped by some cultural values alien to their original ethnic environment, a big need for cultural, psychological and historical decolonization need be conducted. The need for racial memory to assuage the conflicting identity implanted by the English mass culture is the provocative assertion (which seems to justify the hostile treatment of blacks) of Ortega Gasset that 'people do live together not to be together, they live together to do something together' (cited in Steinberg 58).

### **NEXUS BETWEEN ALIENATION, IDENTITY CRISIS AND RACIAL MEMORY**

Sidney Mintz, in an essay, 'The Caribbean Region' maintains that the Caribbeans in the Diaspora, just like the Caribbeans at home, suffer the pangs of *rootlessness* seeing that they lack the central tradition through which migrants could mediate their relationship to each other, this he claims results in the deficiency for an ethnically-based national consciousness, rather, it necessitates 'a social innovativeness based on the modern world' (48). The grand irony of this fact, he continues, is that the Caribbean society intrinsically is plural, such that it is differentiated in terms of 'ethnic and racial expectations'. And he feels that this heterogeneity has not led to any 'pan-Caribbean commonality or strong national identity' (48). He further notes that the Caribbean societies are stratified and class-differentiated in such a way that 'colour' and 'ethnicity' are not in correspondence with class membership (53). Thus he insists that a spectacular theme in Caribbean literature should be:

The special history of Afro-Caribbean peoples, as defined by the enslavement, transplantation, and acculturation: that of continuities and discontinuities with the African past. The second theme... has to do with the plantation system –within which the experience of Afro-Caribbean peoples was so largely encapsulated (55).

But Kamau Brathwaite feels that the genesis of the alienation and identity crisis of the Caribbeans is in the fact that the minute amount of the African culture that survives slavery come under attack during emancipation (75). He goes on to show that the missionaries are against African-oriented practices like dancing with drums; secondly the Western education molded the ex-slaves into pseudo-Europeans, so that even before the Windrush era, the Caribbean oral tradition has come under heavy threat. Moreover, social legislation also provides the necessary backup to both the missionaries and their alienating educational policy (75).

### **THE RELATIVITY OF ALIENATION IN *FRUIT OF THE LEMON***

Faith Jackson is considered alienated because right from her primary school days, her parents do not make any conscious effort to intimate her either with her history or the realities of who she is. That her parents migrated from Jamaica to England on a banana boat (slave ship) during the Windrush era is a fact that she gets from her fellow pupils in the primary school (3). I tag the alienation in this text relative because even the attempt to conceal the truth from Faith and her brother Carl by their parents: Wade and Mildred Jackson is an expression of their (parents') alienation.

This alienation is not just in shying away from their history, but also in doing away with all that use to characterize a typical black-family relationship as the narrator laments that they (Carl and Faith) did not receive any oral tradition from their parents:

My mum and dad never talked about their lives before my brother Carl and I were born. They didn't sit us in front of the fire and tell long tells of the life in Jamaica –of palm trees and yams and playing by rivers. There was no oral tradition in our family. Most of my childhood questions were answered with, 'That was a long time ago' or 'what you want to know that for' (4).

They sometimes claim to have forgotten but the truth is that they feel that their history is too ignoble to be related to the children; but they fail to realize that there cannot be a today without a yesterday. Moreover, they do more harm than good to their children by hiding their history (which slavery is at its root) from them. In the case of any eventuality, if any of those despicable past escapes the mouth of her mother, she vigorously warns Faith not to divulge it to her friends on the single fact that her dad lives in a big house (4).

The relationship between alienation and identity crisis is akin to that of an egg and a chick because once the nexus that binds an individual to his ethical and cultural consciousness is severed, then what ever s/he does that is aberrant to the norms can be an expression of his/her conflict of identity; in this story, we have Faith's middle name to be Columbine, a name after Mildred's mother's stubborn goat back there in Jamaica. Names as we know are more than mere counter sign of thought, in fact Chinua Achebe maintains in essay, 'Chi in Igbo Mythology' that names embody world views, thoughts and beliefs (Achebe 97).

For you to know the fears, worries, cares, preferences or even the philosophy of an Igbo man (a South Eastern tribe in Nigeria), you look at the names he gives his children; this is a microcosm for many other African or African-oriented cultures. But when Faith is named after a late old woman's goat in Jamaica (5), then her parents are truly alienated That zest to attain social acceptance in an environment where being a Black or answering to a name that connotes anything black is 'the victim's' undoing is what drives even Carl, Faith's brother to opt for a change of name from Carl to Trevor just to attain wider social acceptance (18); although he latter changes it back to Carl when he attains a higher cultural awareness.

However, in the case of their parents, their arrival in England is greeted with disillusionment as they stay in Ladbroke Grove where Donald, Wade's brother lives; they have to share the apartment with prostitutes (8). While Wade gets a job as a labourer, Mildred gets as an orderly. After six months of abject poverty in England, it dawns on them that the poverty and life of servitude which they are fleeing from in Jamaica is what they now embrace in England, thus they feel like returning home. They are discriminated against; insulted in their search for accommodation, sometimes with overt invective: 'coloured not needed'; underemployed; but in the face of all these realities,

They are still ready to accept any working condition England offers them, believing that it is still better than going back home, Wade and Mildred, like any other Windrush migrant, hide and suppress their family ties, ethnic consciousness, cultural interaction and any other thing that define their black origin/ancestry provided that get a place in the English socio-economic ladder having seen that their black-related identity is a bane to prosperity in many ways in this society that is hostile and intolerant to racial/cultural differences. Now Faith grows, ignorant of her root, so that the minute cultural awareness and racial consciousness that her home has imbued on her is lost the moment she moves out of her house and moves in with some white friends (17).

## **FAITH AND CONVOLUTED IDENTITY**

The combine effect of Faith's shallow cultural background, Western education in the post war English mass culture, and the influence of her White friends, now makes her fully attain the status of 'black skin, white mask' (Fanon) as her attitude no longer show any bearing with who she is. She can now smoke, club, comfortably keep male friends, as well as keep away from her family members for long without any provocation.

There is no doubt that Faith's psychology is operating from a different frequency from what her father use to know.

## FAITH'S AWAKENING TO THE SUBTLETY OF HER CONFLICTING IDENTITY

Up until Faith finishes her degree program in fashion and textile, she is still ambivalent as to whom she truly is or her place in the environment she finds herself; not even the fact that she did the course as the only black person would make her ask questions on her place in this hostile environment. But some unfolding events plunge her into questioning her personality.

One of such circumstances is the situation that surrounds her occupational mobility. The little drama between her and her Olivia clearly defines so many things about her and about the Western world in general. Her disillusionment is that she runs into Olivia kissing a man right in the office –an act whose ignobility she refers to as: ‘catching the queen, with her knickers down at the toilet’ (33) –and instead of being sorry for violating the etiquette of a typical office set up, she fires Faith; as though to ask: ‘how dare you.’

As Faith moves to get a new job with the BBC Television, it becomes more and more obvious that she does not belong where she thinks all the while that she is a part and parcel of. Mr Henry brazenly makes it clear to her that she cannot just sit on any seat she likes when she wants to sit down (33). This presupposes that hierarchy, class, social strata, and even colour should all be put into consideration in any social activity, including the sitting arrangement in an office. At the course of her interview, Faith asks the board so probing a question that taking her becomes a seeming inevitability. Faith, being overzealous, asks them thus: ‘Someone told me that you don’t like black people dressing. Is it right (108)? Mr Williams who hitherto has told her that she is over qualified for the job now denies the allegation (109); and they decide to offer him the job to seemingly prove her wrong, but they still reserve their prejudice and mischief for it to be meted out to her in the course of discharging her duty.

From the foregoing, there is just one question that defines every human relation in this work; that question is: ‘who are you?’ as defining as this question seems, it has many middle courses with implications. For instance, what is your colour and so on? In the street, at the office, in the church, in the school, at home, while choosing residence, this question gains expression or is covertly implied and the answer that follows it determines the level the individual in question will go in such an endeavour. Following this, Faith’s confusion becomes gradually compounded for she grapples with the implications of the ‘negative answer’ she embodies towards the above question in the outer society

Whether in the home or outside the home, we notice that at any point where the question of identity is thrown up, Faith is being launched into a pensive thought that inexorably demands that she re-defines whom she is because every other benchmark that she has initially used to define herself seem to shift ground at every of these incidents. Gradually, the ethnic consciousness that has been missing in Wade and Mildred suddenly shimmers its gleams of illumination on them, such that they decide to go home (44). The racial memory we see them exhibit now manifests as nostalgia and homesickness. Even Carl seems liberated from that level of crisis as regards his personality and identity. He has discovered his self-image and we see him turn penchant for the country life and green pasture (55), showing disdain for city life, including resurrecting his name Carl and dropping Trevour, the name he adopted when he is still alienated. His parents do not have fears as to whether he would survive England in the event of their return to Jamaica.

They have confidence in him and his fiancée Ruth who appears a cultural evangelist. Consequently, Mildred summons Faith to know the condition under which she works. Faith complains of coldness and indifference as the prevailing attitude under which she works (67). In fact she earlier on intones that there city is filthy (56), the kind of assertion that she has not made before; everything round her suggests that she is depressed as the English society has given her more than she can accommodate. In spite of that, she is still ambivalent and cannot read the hand writing on the wall.

The last straw that breaks the camel's back is the condition of service offered to Faith in the Costume Department of the BBC Television. Her reality is that she is the only serving black person in that department (70). The department does not ordinarily accept blacks, but her record is quite intimidating, in addition to the sensational question she puts up to them during the interview. But having been admitted into the department, she is not allowed to dress any actor for three months. Her friend, Lorraine encourages her to be strong in the face of racial prejudice; her mother equally encourages her to be strong as she (Faith) laments the treatment she receives as she overtly confesses to the place of the blacks even in the Department of Costume in BBC Television (73).

At this point, Mildred, her mother is already planning the tool(s) to employ in redeeming her daughter. She reminds Faith that she has three potent weapons to fight and regain her rightful place in the face of racial prejudice. The weapons, for Mildred, are Faith's good background/upbringing, education, and sound religious inclination (73)

Even as Faith accompanies Marion her friend home, again, she comes face to face with racism as she witnesses Marion's father's verdict on her kid sister's action at school. Even while the family is away on the ball they attend with Faith, Marion's daddy does not like the last performance because it is put up by a black poet, and the only one there present (93). Similarly, Faith chronicles her encounter that provokes ethnic thoughts that would probe her identity; there in Simon's country home, Faith has the first picture of Jamaica from Andrew Bunyan, the barrister who owns the old cottage. He just returns from Jamaica on a tourist visit. He narrates to Faith of having met a man who answers to his family name, Winston Bunyan, a boat attendant. Faith curtly explains that Andrew's family owned Winston's family during slavery (131). It is obvious that the Faith we see here as she responds to Mr Bunyan is such that is gradually moulting from her old scale of cultural ignorance; growing from naivety to experience. But even a glimpse of racial memory which Faith has exhibited only amounts to subscribing to the preliminaries of her identity revision as everyone seems amazed by her astuteness in dissecting the barrister's puzzle and so Simon's mother wants to know more about her root as she asked her barrage of question to that effect (132).

Faith's eventual portrayal of total ignorance about her root points to the root cause of her identity crisis. Even the white woman, Simon's mother understands that this is terrible and admonishes something that even her parents have not suggested but which is at the root of Faith's crisis; she admonishes; 'Well, it will be wonderful for you to be able to visit. Aren't you curious to go? (133)'

Racial memory seems the only antidote for Faith's recuperation from the depression of being excluded from taking part in the production because they consider her inexperienced because she has worked for just three months. The opportunity she has to participate demands that she dresses, not human beings, but a teddy called Alfred and a doll, Molly for children TV (148-9). This is followed by Simon's story of how a poor black woman has been victimized in the book shop just because those hoodlums do not like her (159). As she ruminates on all these, she engages in a pensive thought and concludes that she has been lost all these while:

.... Ruth was right, I thought to myself.... Ruth is absolutely right. What it all comes down to in the end is black against white. It was simple. It was so simple (159).

## **RACIAL MEMORY AND CULTURAL REDEMPTION**

Faith's depression has degenerated into distress, and so her parents decided that she would travel to Jamaica to recuperate. The rest of the novel is then preoccupied with the process of unlearning Faith has to go through to liberate her from her alienation and identity crisis. As she gets to the airport, the first impression of the Jamaican is that of displeasure;

I was halfway through the lounge making my way to the Jamaican Airlines Check-in when I saw them. Shabby-looking people. Shabby-looking black people, with men dressed in baggy trousers held up at the waist with belt women with huge bottoms in tight-fitting skirts with no tights and sandals on their feet (166).

As Faith looks at the air plane, she thinks that they look too poor to fly (166), but the first cultural lesson she learns even from the airport is that her people have a language (*patois*) after all. As she arrives in Kingston in Jamaica, she describes her experience as 'culture shock' (169), hence she feels that she may not survive the heat. The Jamaica she sees is not idealized but as real as it appears in the pictures she has seen. Faith is even surprised that Jamaica is not as backward as her parents make it seem; at least, Auntie Coral, her mother's sister is comfortably living in a bungalow and not on a tree top, she uses modern wares and gadgets and not animal skins or earthen ware (180).

The exposition of her family history to her is like conducting a psychological surgery on Faith. She comes to understand how religiously inclined her people are unlike what the English mass culture offers. And this gains expression in the condemnation she gets from Auntie Coral over what Coral considers Faith's indecent dressing (198), which turns her into a sight attraction at that wedding ceremony where she (Faith) appears in church in trousers. From the numerous histories of their family tree from multiple accounts, one thing becomes obvious to Faith. That fact is that every effect that English society can have on an individual, that the Caribbean society still secrets a similar tendency. Talking about alienation (Matilda, Coral's fair auntie); identity crisis (Grace, her grandmother); colour gradation (Matilda and Violet Chance); and so on.

Also exposed to her is the respect that blacks have for the dead as they visit Violet Chance, where Faith's grandparents are buried. She is forbidden from climbing the grave mounds of her grandparents for it would amount to gross insolence (254); an act she considers superstitious for she claims to have visited the English archive and sits on the same sit that William Shakespeare sat and courted Anne Hathaway. As Faith's holiday elapses, she is fully learned in her history and racial memory that have informed who she truly is (her unique personal identity). Faith sets about returning to England, a new person who now knows all the familial relationships that define her kith and kin as well as herself; this would properly place her where she belongs to function within her capacity as a black. An awareness of her identity would make her choose the kind of job, spouse, relationship, and so on that she can identify with.

## CONCLUSIONS

M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham make it clear that *Bildungsroman*, as in this novel, represents a 'novel of formation or education' (229). For them, the preoccupation of such a novel is the development of the protagonist's mind and character, the transition from childhood and naivety through variegated experiences –'often through spiritual crisis –into maturity' (229).

This maturity for our characters: Wade Jackson, Mildred, Carl, Faith and others, consists in their final recognition, awareness and consciousness of their identity. Faith sets out as an alienated Windrush child but discovers that she doesn't belong where she forces to fix herself. She consequently presses to discover herself and her identity; and this presupposes being schooled in the racial memory of her people –in did, the Caribbeans are the fruit of the lemon, very pretty in appearance but very bitter in taste with regards to their historical experiences.

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